1/31/69

Dear Harold,

Got your note this evening. As you can see by the enclosed transcript, I didn't have as much trouble with Butler as I'd expected. To that later, first xxxx a couple other things.

My silence was because, as usual, everything happened at once. I worked very hard getting ready for that Butler xx debate. I read day and night for a week. I was prepared to discuss everything from Oswald's military career to the Internal Securities Act. So, first of all, I was really wiped out and needed rest . But that same week, two days before the debate, I finally got served with divorce papers, and had to appear in court January 27 . That created some problems because I can't really afford to have an attorney appearing in court with me, but my draft lawyer agreed to consult with me, so I had to get another batch of material together for the court appearance. Then, since I didn't use one-tenth of the material I developed for the Butler debate I set out to line up a couple more TV shows. I've got a number of projects and letters to work on and I hope to catch them all up this weekend.

I'm writing to Elijah Muhammed on the far-out chance that I might be able to get him to make a statement concerning the Malcolm assassination. That is, not a statement, but rather to go into detail on the statements he made. I've found a possible ploy: In 1959 when Thurgood Marshall was chief legal counsel for the NAACP he gave an address at Princeton in which he denounced the Muslims as "run by a bunch of thugs organized from prisons and jails, and financed, I am sure, by Nasser or some Arab group." With Marshall in the Supreme Court, RFK supposedly murdered by a mad Arab, and the problems in the Mid-East, the pressure may begin to be felt by The Messenger.

A curious thing happened in Chicago yesterday. A guy poured gasoline on himself and set himself on fire in the lobby of the Mercnadise Mart. The early reports in the newspaper said he mumbled that he "knew something about the assassinations" and wanted to appear on television. In the later accounts, though, it said he was protesting the assassinationsbecause he felt the government was behind them. The guy's name was Jack Sieburg, he's from a suburb, Arlington Heights. At any rate, I have his address and also will write to him this weekend and see if he does know anything.

Butler: First , let me apologize for Conway's introduction of me. As far as I knew, he was going to introduce me as a freelance writer and reporter, but he took the rest of it from the heading on the first Torch article to make it seem more dramatic. I'd like yourappraisal of the thing. I was very pleased with it, because I felt that even though he talked a lot forensically I won -- I think. He was backing up most of the way after the first five minutes. I spoke with him afterwards for a while, and he swears up and down that he thought Pyne told you he was going to be on the show. Anyhow, I told him that you'd said you'd like to debate him again, and he said he'd get in touch

with you because he had no reason to be unwilling to debate you again. So I told him that I couldn't see how anyone could leave Harold speechless and he took the bait, he asked me for my address and said he'd send me a tape of the Pyne show. So if he doesn't forget you may yet get a tape of it. The transcript is an exact verbatim script. If you want a tape of it as well let me know. At any rate, I let him get away with a lot of outrageous dumb remarks, because I was thinking of the time we had and the important points I wanted to get across. If you read his long monologues carefully I think you'll see a lot of interesting lies and perhaps slips of the tongue. One place he says he thinks Oswald had every reason in the world to kill the President.

I'm also sending you a copy of the ~~xxxxxxxx~~ second Torch article. Let's see what else is here: copies of the two articles about Vallee that you didn't have, there's another one that you don't have, but it was only in one issue of the paper and I can't find that issue anywhere. A copy of the letter from Parade citing Clark Clifford as the source of theJFK quote. A very, very bad copy of the 1959 article on Lee Harvey Oswald. If you need a better copy of the Oswald article let me know and I'll get it for you.

I checked on Arthur Schlesinger in relation to the quote in Parade Magazine. At the time of the Bay of Pigs Clark Slifford was on the Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board, so he would have been in a position to hear such a remark from JFK. But in "A Thousand Days," Schlesinger also talks about it. On P. 276 he discusses what JFK said after the Bay of Pigs: "(allen) Dulles is a legendary figure, and it's hard to operate with legendary figures... We will have to do something...I must have someone there (in CIA) with whom I can be in complete and intimate contact -- someone from whom I know I will be getting the exact pitch. I made a mistake in putting Bobby in the Justice Department. He is wasted there. Byron White could do that job perfectly well. Bobby should be in the CIA. It is a hell of a way to learn things, but I have learned one thing from this business -- that is, that we will have to deal with CIA. McNamara has dealt with defense; Rusk has done a lot with State; but no one has dealt with CIA." Then on page 428 Schlesinger says: "After the Bay of Pigs, Robert Kennedy took a personal interest in the CIA and became an informal presidential watchdog over covert operations."

I hope your man Dick Bernabei will get in touch with me, because I would like to expand this Malcolm business out here. I hope to align with Bill Wirthy, I've got to write him this weekend, too.

Just one more thing. Ivan Dee wrote and said what he read of my novel seemed to him to be pretty much ordinary fiction, and he suggested Doubleday, Simon & Schuster or Random House. So I've got a query out to Simon & Schuster.

Lita sends her love to you and Lillian. That's about all for now, try to keep everyone in line in New Orleans. I get the paper every day to see what's happening there, but the reports are skimpy in Chicago newspapers; although the radio and television stations here report on it every day. Good Luck.

Russ

P.S. The STUdio AUdience WAS A Busload OF ARMY WIVES FROM FORT SHERIDAN.